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THE CHRISTIAN'S CLOSET.

HARRIET MCEWAN KIMBALL.

I need not leave the jostling world,
Or wait till daily tasks are o'er,
To fold my hands in secret prayer
Within the close-shut closet door.

There is a viewless cloistered room
As high as heaven, as fair as day;
Where, though my feet may join the throng,
My soul can enter in and pray.

And never through those crystal walls
The clash of life can pierce its way;
Nor ever can a human ear
Drink in the secret words I say.

One hearkening even cannot know
When I have crossed the threshold o'er;
For He alone who hears my prayer,
Has heard the shutting of the door.

Portsmouth, N. H.

SWITZERLAND, THE WORLD'S ARBITER.

A gentleman, a native of Switzerland, temporarily in America, makes some suggestions in the following letter which our readers will be glad to read.

REV. R. B. HOWARD, Secretary of the American Peace Society, Boston:

Dear Sir—The time will come, I have no doubt, when the "Peace Society" will have to extend its work and take an initiative in a greater number of questions than it has done until now. It will have to take hold of every great social, moral and economical problem which may forward the peace and union among nations and men. Wherever possible, the settlement by arbitration will have to be insisted upon by the "Peace Society," whose duty it will be to take up every question which may disturb the peace of nations, to exercise and study it, and to bring the result of its investigations before the Swiss government at Berne, seat of all International Unions, inviting it to propose to the other governments that a diplomatic conference should be held to discuss the question at issue. Should the governments refuse to respond to this invitation, the "Peace Society" could still make a last effort in favor of an arbitration, in making known through the everywhere present press, the result of its investigations to the civilized world, *the court of last appeal*.

Such a mode of working would perhaps be worthy of being considered by the "American Peace Society." I have no doubt that the Swiss government would always be ready to give its most cordial support to any proposition for arbitration. The following passage by a late English minister plenipotentiary at Berne, gives us full assurance thereof.

Sir Francis Ottewell Adams in his remarkable work on "The Swiss Confederation," published a short time ago, says in his chapter on "International Unions":

"The establishment of various international unions, having their seat at Berne, on the soil of neutral Switzerland, is a matter which well deserves the consideration of thoughtful men, as tending to bind nations closer together, and thus working in the direction of peace. The fact, too, that Switzerland has been chosen as the home of these unions is one which will gradually give to her a peculiar position of honor and usefulness in the world."

"A report upon this subject by Mr. Conway Thornton

will be found in one of the Blue Books presented to Parliament in 1885, and is well worth perusal.

"In 1863, as is well known, a private committee, the members of which belonged to different nationalities, assembled at Geneva, and drew up a plan for the protection of the wounded in battle. They then requested the Federal Council, as the central government of the country in which they had held their sittings, to propose to the other governments that a diplomatic conference should be held in Switzerland in order to discuss this humane and important question. The Federal Council accepted the task, and the consequence was that delegates from many powers were sent to Geneva where the memorable Convention of the 22nd of August, 1864, was signed.

"This Convention may fairly be looked upon as the origin of the selection of Switzerland by the powers for the natural seat of various *international unions* which have since been founded."

Mr. Thornton concludes his report with the following observations:

"It is difficult, when passing through the quiet streets of Berne, to realize the importance of the operations which are being unobtrusively carried on, or the worldwide scope of the interests involved. Yet it cannot be doubted that these interests form a more effectual guarantee for the preservation of Switzerland as an independent State than any other that could be devised. This position she has gained by the study of the conveniences of mankind, or, in other words, by making herself useful to every one, while offending none. It may even be hoped that this spirit may in time *extend itself to other nations* with beneficial results to humanity at large. The confidence reposed by other countries in Switzerland, in the formation of these unions, tends to create a more unrestrained intercourse between them in matters of daily life, which can hardly fail to be productive of a progressively improving understanding among them all."

C. A. N.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

The Era of International Congresses.—Rivalry of England and America on the High Seas.—Something not shown the Pan-Americans.—The Sabbath and the Exposition of 1892.

NEW YORK, Jan., 1890.

Mr. Editor—The Marine Congress has adjourned, and while its outcome shows no great advance in the science of safe seamanship, it did some useful work in harmonizing signals at sea, and in suggesting other rules to guide navigators of different nations. As an exhibition of international courtesy throughout its sessions, it did good. No sharper jealousies have been incurred than those between rival owners and officers of vessels, and the mutual kindness exhibited in the discussions was remarkable, especially as the older maritime men in our country once accustomed to dispute the commerce of the seas with Great Britain, are restive under her present supremacy. Like the Anti-Slavery Congress at Brussels, the Marine Congress marks an advance in international comity.

The Conference of American nations has created a greater sensation. It has been lionized, feted and generally "shown about" our country, chiefly because shrewd traders thought they saw an opportunity to increase

their markets, and shrewd politicians love to defer to the demands of trade.

But underlying these superficial demonstrations by the people and the Government, there has been a genuine desire to promote the highest interest of this continent in the way of friendly intercourse and perpetual peace. So far, this body has appointed good committees, one on arbitration,—eaten good dinners, smoked our tariff-burdened cigars, drunk our highly taxed foreign wines, looked at our territory, our manufactories and our political institutions, and done nothing else so far as the public are informed. It was convoked, after years of discussion, partly at least, in consequence of petitions for it, to which the peace societies secured thousands of signatures. Andrew Carnegie is a member from the United States. The people will be sorely disappointed both in him and in the Conference if there be no pronounced action on the subject of a permanent system of international arbitration. If the committee on the subject have a "hearing," there will be an effort made to secure the strongest presentation of the case possible.

Religious people are, in this connection, indignant at the countenancing by our Government of Sunday travel, and Sunday shows such as the theatres exhibit. They demand that foreigners accustomed to tobacco and spirits and no Sabbath and little religion, should at least have an opportunity to see the working of the moral and religious institutions of the country. While we may not force our own tastes or morals upon our guests, we demand that the members of our Government elected by the votes of the moral and religious classes, and who personally profess godliness, should not abdicate all observance of religious duty out of deference to visitors.

In view of our proposed Exposition of 1892 (Columbian), the above remarks have added significance. If the American Sabbath, for instance, is to be sacrificed to Continental Europe, whether resident in America or merely visiting this country, there are many of us who would vote "no Exposition." This question will not "down," and our politicians will hear more of it. It is not American wealth, manufactures, agriculture, ingenuity, industry and literature alone that should be exhibited, but American Christianity. A country "with one religion," and the least possible of that, may properly exhibit nothing but what she possesses. The "many religions" which we are accused of having, are at least Christian to some extent and ought to be a part of the exhibition of our greatness, which derives its chief value from Protestant and Puritan ideas.

We want the first Peace Congress ever held on the Western Hemisphere in 1892. But we are willing to postpone or forego that Congress, rather than to sacrifice our self-respect and deny the Prince of Peace.

The President of the United States was a Presbyterian Elder and Bible Class teacher. The Secretary of State ("Premier") is a member of a Congregational Church in good standing. Our new Chief Justice is a prominent and active Episcopalian. Our rulers ought to be as pronounced in their Christianity, at least, as the Englishmen Gladstone or John Bright.

We rejoice to hear that special effort will be made to secure a good Parliamentary Peace Congress in London next year. How about the general Peace Congress to meet at nearly the same time?

The time is near when Governments should invite and pay the expenses of such Congresses as they do those of the Marine and Anti-Slavery Conferences. *AMERICUS.*

EUROPEAN ARMAMENTS.

PARIS LETTER.

Dear Sir—It is rather discouraging to the friends of peace that the increase of European armaments should be not only in a continuous degree but in exact proportion, as for instance, in the case of Switzerland, whose war estimates have gone up with a tremendous leap—reluctantly, we may be sure, and against the very grain of its rulers.

Then as regards Germany, whilst the Emperor William proclaims himself the great champion of peace, the Parliament of Berlin is shortly to be solicited for an additional vote of credit to still further strengthen the army. I find from an Italian military review that that army as it stands to-day is as follows:

Active Army, 3 classes.....	495,000 men.
Reserves, 4 classes.....	678,000 "
Landwehr of the 1st ban.....	685,000 "
Complementary reserve, 7 classes for the standing army and 5 classes for the Landwehr of the 2d ban classes.....	815,000 "
Landsturm of the 1st ban (men from 17 to 39 years of age).....	3,072,000 "
Landsturm of the 2d ban (40 to 45 years)	1,225,000 "
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Total.....	6,970,000 men.

Since the military *septennate* was voted, Germany has thus been in a position to place seven million two hundred men in the field, and this figure it seems is not enough to guard the peace. Little wonder that the indefinite multiplication of such crushing burdens should be daily strengthening the action of the Socialists, which threatens to undermine the military fabric built up for the glory of the Hohenzollern dynasty.

As the leader of the Socialist party, Herr Lieblknecht, recently said in the Reichstag,

"A party like yours formerly relied upon Frederick the Great's invincible army; but Prussia was beaten at Jena. The situation is the same at this hour. You are relying upon your invincible army and you fancy that you can disown the spirit of the age. Do what you will the catastrophe will come, and you will be overwhelmed with a Jena more formidable than the first."

Yours very truly,

H. W. B.

The following extract from a letter from a woman, a member of the Society of Friends, voices a general feeling:

Respected Friend—I have not failed to notice the progress of the arbitration movement. It does my very soul good, and may the day be hastened when *all* of every nation may be able to see the true nature of war, that it is in open violation to God's commands, a relic of heathenism and barbarism, and that Arbitration is a much wiser, nobler and less expensive in a great many ways.

I want to encourage thee to do all that thou canst. It don't seem that I can do much.

R. E. N.

West Branch, Ia.

In France there is a penalty of 20,000 francs for publishing the revolting details in a divorce case. In New York they are the Sunday literature of the masses. That is a sentence for the man who takes a Sunday newspaper and some others into his family to ponder.